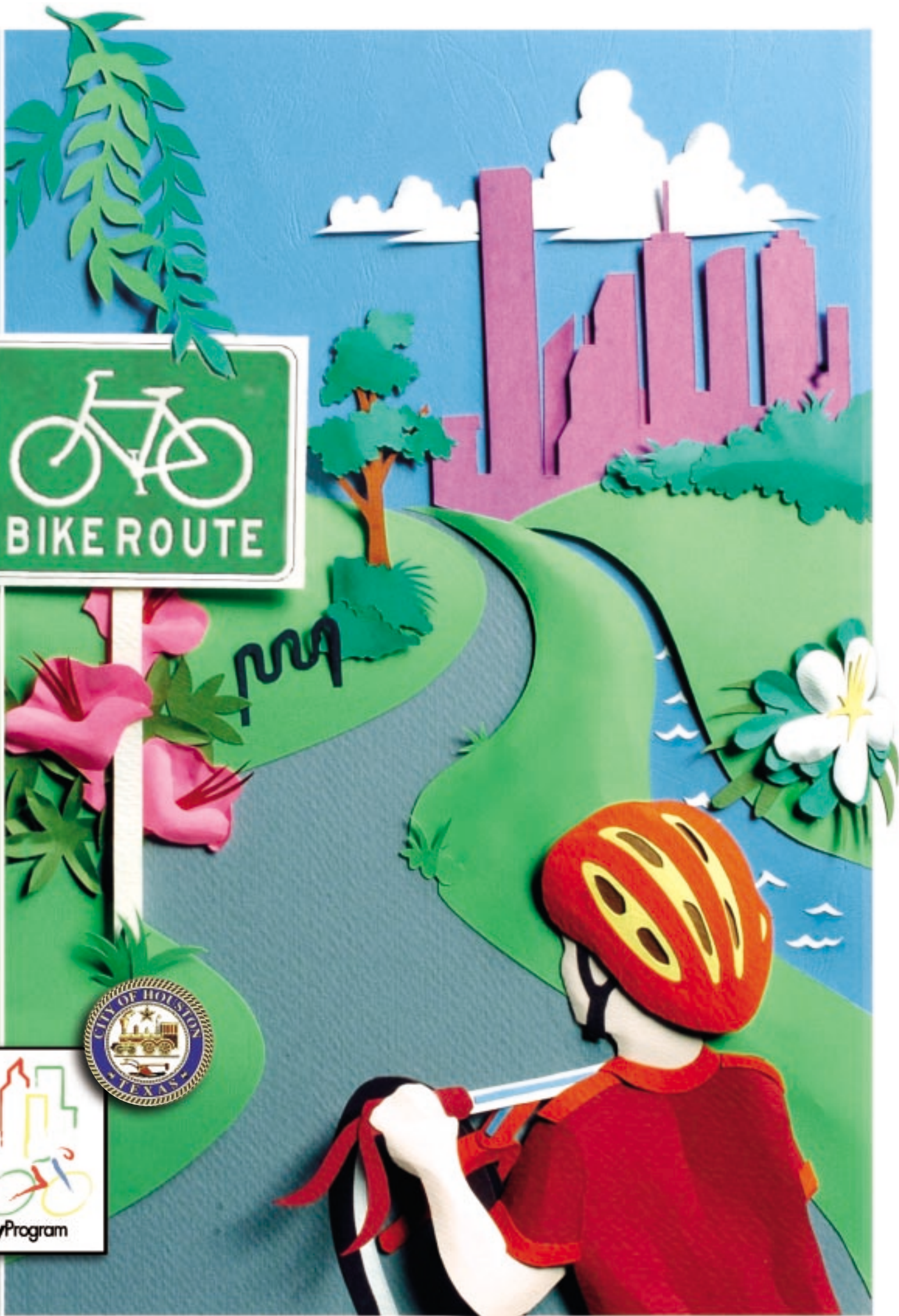


# BIKE SMART

with the Houston Bikeway Program



HoustonBikewayProgram





## There are 290 miles of bikeways

for you to enjoy in the city of Houston. Some of these are on Houston streets, and others are in parks and on bayou trails. Some bikeways are for bike riders only. Others are for both bikes and cars. And you should always be alert so that you spot pedestrians along the way.

This handbook covers the basic rules of bicycling in Houston. It's important to know them – they could even save your life!

## Every bike rider

is safer when he or she wears a helmet.

And in Houston, every bike rider up to age 17 **MUST** wear a good-fitting helmet that is properly secured. A good helmet can prevent an injury to your brain – which works like the hard drive on your computer. It runs your body's software.

So don't crash your hard drive – wear a helmet! A properly fitting helmet can reduce a bike rider's risk of major injury or death by 88%, according to bicyclinginfo.org

### Your helmet should:

- ➡ **NOT** block your eyesight on either side or in front of you.
- ➡ **LAY STRAIGHT** across your head, with the thick part on the back and only two fingers above your forehead.
- ➡ **FIT SNUG** with the side straps in a "V" just below your ears. Leave room for two fingers between the strap and your chin.

Buy a helmet that has a Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) certified tag on the inside. And if you fall or there's any impact to your helmet, replace it!

# ROAD RULES!

When on the road, a bicycle is just like cars and trucks. A bike rider must follow the same rules as other vehicles and the most important rule is to be **ALERT**. Know what's going on around you!

**ALWAYS** ride in the same direction as traffic. Obey traffic signs and signals, and ride only one cyclist per seat.

**Ride to the right** (except when you need to turn left), and avoid the "car door zone." Use designated bikeways when possible.

At **four-way stops**, the first vehicle to reach the intersection gets to cross the intersection first. If it is a tie, the first vehicle to the right goes first. Make eye contact before you cross.

**MOTORISTS:** Watch for cyclists and pedestrians especially when exiting a driveway. Check your left and right before making a turn. And yield to crossing cyclists and pedestrians at stops, crosswalks or intersecting bikeways.

**Bicycles are NOT allowed on sidewalks** with businesses on both sides or with riders 10 years of age or older **UNLESS** there are hazardous conditions on the road.

**Parents decide** when children are ready to ride on the road.

**ALWAYS** yield to pedestrians.

# BE A HELMET HEAD!

# BE COOL!

# BIKE TALK

**Cyclist** – a person who rides a bicycle

**Designated** – marked for a special purpose

**Hydrated** – when you drink enough water to keep your body working well

**Motorist** – someone who drives a car, van or truck

**Pedestrian** – a person who walks

**Yield** – Come to a complete stop and let a person or vehicle cross in front of you.

## WHY BIKE?

It's **healthy** – for you & the planet. You get exercise, and you don't gobble gasoline & burp pollution when you ride a bike. It's a **FUN** way to get around!



# BEFORE YOU RIDE

## A BikeSmart Checklist ✓

Make sure your gear and equipment are working **before** you leave home. Bike should be right size, right fit.

- ✓ Check your **Tires** – find the PSI (pressure) number on the side of the tirewall. Inflate to the proper pressure.
- ✓ **Brakes** that cause tire to skid on dry pavement
- ✓ Snug, lubricated **Chain**
- ✓ Secure **Seat & Handlebars**. If it's tight, it's right.
- ✓ Tight **Spokes**
- ✓ **Reflectors & Lights**
- ✓ **Bell or Horn**
- ✓ **Gears** that shift correctly

**AND** a bike tune-up once a year is a good idea. Know the safest route to take. **Test your route** with a friend or parent.

Bring a **water bottle** and wear **sunscreen**.

Always **check for traffic** when you are entering the street from a driveway. Look left, right and then left again.

### Registration, Please

All bicycles should be registered with the City of Houston. It's easy! Just go to your nearest Houston fire station. Registration only costs **\$1**, and the information can be used by the Houston Police Department if your bicycle is lost or stolen. Visit [houstonfire.org](http://houstonfire.org) for locations.

## Dressed to Ride!

Be **SEEN** in the Dark!

It's the law in Texas to have a white front light on your bike, plus a **RED REAR REFLECTOR**. It's a good idea to use both a **BLINKING RED LIGHT** and a **REAR-VIEW MIRROR!**

Wear reflective strips and white or bright-colored clothing so drivers can see you easily. Even in the daylight, black and other dark colors can "disappear."

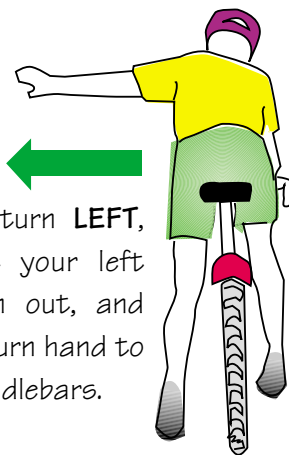
# WHOA!

Slow down, dismount and walk your bike over anything that might trip you – big holes in the road or sidewalk, cracked and uneven pavements, grating over sewer drains! When road hazards force you to ride on sidewalks, remember that pedestrians have the right of way. **Call out a warning** – such as "Passing on your left!" – to let them know what you plan to do.

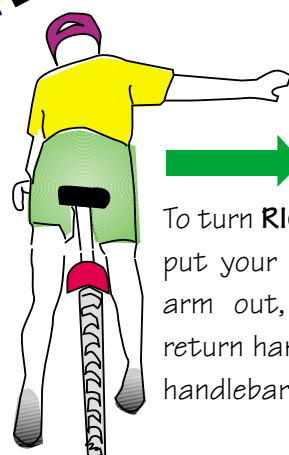
## SEND THE RIGHT SIGNALS!

Always check around you – **LOOK** ahead, behind and to the sides – before you make a turn. Use **HAND SIGNALS** to tell others what you plan to do.

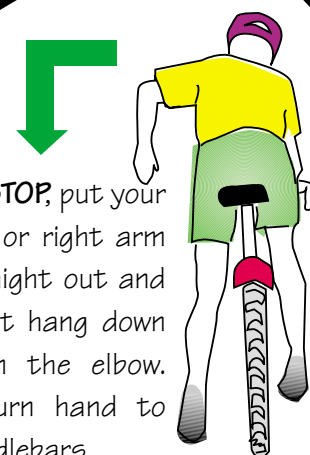
- ➡ Keep both hands **on your handlebars** except when you are signaling a turn.
- ➡ When passing, use a bell or loudly say "**PASSING**" to let the person in front of you know that you're coming around them.
- ➡ Call out behind you "**SLOWING**" or "**STOPPING**" when reducing your speed – avoid pile-ups.



To turn **LEFT**, put your left arm out, and return hand to handlebars.



To turn **RIGHT**, put your right arm out, and return hand to handlebars.



To **STOP**, put your left or right arm straight out and let it hang down from the elbow. Return hand to handlebars.